

TIJUANA ISSUES SUB-COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

February 27, 2007

Clay Phillips chaired the sub-committee. Self-introductions were made.

Attendees:

Clay Phillips, Tijuana River National Estuarine Reserve
Ricardo Martinez, CAL EPA
Martin Suro, US Border Patrol
Mike Hance, CA Border Patrol
Doug Gibson, Regional Water Quality Control Board
Patrick McDonough, County of San Diego
Maeve Hanley, County of San Diego
Scott Harvey, IWMB
Rick Van Schoik, SCERP
Don Brubaker, USFWS
Doug Liden, US EPA
Kevin O'Connor, City of San Diego
Lauren McNees, CBC
Janet Fairbanks. CBC

The sub-committee reviewed their objectives:

- To develop a proposal(s) that will fund new sediment basins in canyons that drain into the estuary,
- the development of a neighborhood condominium sewer project(s) in Los Laureles Canyon,
- the preservation of land through dedicated conservation easements, and
- the prevention and/or management of tires and trash washing into the estuary.

The product of the sub-committee will be the scope and budget for projects that meet the objectives, the identification of granting agencies that could provide funding for the identified projects and the identification of appropriate agencies to serve as grant applicators / recipients.

The sub-committee reviewed the assignments that were made at the last meeting.

1. **Eric Reichard**, USGS was not present at the meeting, **Janet Fairbanks** gave his report. **Sam Johnson** and **Ned Andrews** from USGS have been working on sediment issues in the Tijuana Estuary. **Sam's** expertise is sediment transport. He is looking at issues relating to the "80-20" (coarse-fine) sediment standards for beach disposal. He feels that we need better measurements of discharge and sediment load to understand the type of

sediment and the amount of sediment flowing into the estuary. We could benefit from improved and updated rating curves. **Ned's** expertise is quantifying sediment fluxes in the coastal zone. He could compute the average historical sediment loads in the estuary before any development if he was provided with the necessary data. This could provide quantification on the effects of development. He stated that if the sediment is too fine, sediment basins may not be efficient. In some cases it is the reduction in streamflow, rather than an increase in mass of the sediment source that leads to sediment buildup. While urbanization may initially cause an increase in erosion, in later stages there is often a decrease. But, we will not know this without further study. **Janet** volunteered to contact USGS and **Karen Bane** to determine next steps and to encourage one of them to attend the next meeting.

2. **Mike Hance**, DHS, reported that DHS (Department of Homeland Security) has a grant program and that funds might be used for sediment basins for projects related to border security. If it is determined that sediment will interfere with security measures, such as impeding the operation of in-ground sensing devices, or requiring the clearing of border security roads, then DHS could work with us to site the basins, build them, and maintain them. DHS could also assist with the removal of non-native vegetation. **Ricardo Martinez** will speak with **Matt Bettenhouser** in the Governor's Office of Homeland Security to find out funding opportunities and constraints regarding sediment basins and invasive species removal. The group decided to spend time on this topic next month after we have more information from DHS. The County of San Diego reported that they share maintenance responsibilities of Smuggler's Gulch with the City of San Diego. The County is taking a "wait and see" stand regarding future opportunities for this property.
3. **Maeve Hanley** reported on the Nelson/Sloan property. Part of the property has been condemned for the future border fence. Also, DHS may need land for a road, but it is not clear where or how much. There could be an opportunity to site a basin on part of the property, restoring the remaining; but they need funds to prepare a reclamation plan, and further information from DHS regarding their plans for infrastructure improvements in the area.
4. **Clay Phillips** reported that **Senator Denise Ducheny's** office has agreed to participate in this process and be of assistance if needed.
5. **Don Brubaker** displayed a map of the border showing ownership patterns on the north side of the border. The group decided that it would be helpful to prepare a GIS map of the border region (both sides) showing ownership, topography, and vegetation. **Don** will contact **Oscar Romo** for files on the Mexican side, **Patrick McDonough** will give Don GIS shape files for the US side. **Lauren McNees** will check with the office of FRAP to see what information they may have, and **Janet Fairbanks** will check with SANDAG.

6. **Janet Fairbanks** will contact **Oscar Romo** regarding the scope, budget, and deliverables for a condominium sewerage pilot project.
7. **All members** were asked to help identify NGOs operating on both sides of the border that could be of assistance with these projects.
8. **Doug Liden** reported that he contacted CEPST regarding support for a condominium sewage project in key neighborhoods in Tijuana. If a condominium sewage project fits in with CESPT's long-term strategy, they would be in a position to apply for Border 2012 funds. **Ricardo Martinez** volunteered to draft a formal invitation inviting CESPT to join the committee. **Clay** reported that "Engineers Without Borders" is an organization that might fund a condominium sewage project. **Clay** will determine if there have been any studies determining the level of flow from the Los Laureles neighborhood into the estuary.
9. **Clay Phillips** reported that he had a conversation with Anthony Talamantez, San Diego Regional Manager for ERRG, an environmental engineering firm. They discussed opportunities for creating a waste tire recycling program in San Diego County. In 2005 there were 4,000 tires plucked from the estuary, in 2006 it dropped to about 1,000 tires. There are no tire recycling opportunities in San Diego and it is not cost effective to transport the tires to a recycling center in Los Angeles therefore the tires are disposed of in a landfill, which cost about \$2 per tire. Mr. Talamantez stated that it would take at least 10,000 waste tires a year in need of recycling before a private enterprise might be interested in setting up a center in San Diego. Clay added that this is not merely a "dollars and cents" issue, but is an environmental ethics problem. Conservation agencies shouldn't be contributing to landfills when there may be an opportunity for recycling. **Scott Harvey** reported that one of the functions of the Integrated Waste Management Board (IWMB) is to develop markets for waste tires. Currently 750,000 tires a year are legally allowed to enter Mexico, but it is estimated that an additional 1,250,000 tires enter illegally. It was asked if the trucks taking the tires to Mexico come back empty; if so, and if a viable tire recycling program is set up, could the trucks return to the United States with waste tires from Mexico. **Ricardo Martinez** agreed to find out if there are laws prohibiting this from occurring. **Scott** agreed to have IWMB help us determine if a recycling market could sustain itself in San Diego. **Clay** agreed to call Anthony to see if he could provide information on what we need to do to start a recycling program and invite him to the next meeting. **Patrick McDonough** agreed to find out how many tires wash up on County land.
10. The group then turned its attention to other types of trash, specifically plastic bottles. **Lauren McNees** agreed to contact the Department of Conservation to find out what is involved in recycling plastics. She will coordinate her efforts with Scott Harvey.

Clay Phillips summarized for the group the various ongoing activities related to the projects discussed today.

- The State Coastal Conservancy and the Parks Department is working with a local engineering firm on a trash consolidation system for Goat Canyon. This effort, while restricted to Goat Canyon because of funding, could have applications elsewhere in the Tijuana River Valley.
- The International Community Foundation (ICF), in concert with TRNERR, will be applying to the Wetlands Recovery Program for a \$30,000 grant to implement erosion control measures for denuded slopes in the upper basin of Los Laureles Canyon. Engineers Without Borders is providing advise on this project.
- The International Community Foundation (ICF), in concert with TRNERR, has applied to the USEPA for a \$900,000 grant to conduct comprehensive erosion improvements (including education) in Los Laureles Canyon over a 3-year period.
- Civil servants from the State of Baja California toured Yogurt Canyon on both sides of the border and will be actively engaged in determining the source of nuisance water flowing year-round into the estuary.
- DHS/Army Corps is working to determine the final alignment of the proposed fence as it crosses Yogurt Canyon.
- SWIA has been working with IBWC to implement a low-water diversion system in Yogurt Canyon; similar to those that exist in both Goat Canyon and Smuggler's Gulch.

The group concluded its meeting with a discussion about the International Treatment Plant's permit. **Doug Liden** agreed to look into the permit and **Janet Fairbanks** will invite IBWC to attend the next meeting.

The group then reported out its next steps to the full group.

We adjourned at 4:00 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 27th at 1:00 p.m.

